

SCHOOL / PROGRAM CLOSURE

The Board believes that the students of the Division must have the opportunity to receive educational programming that is characterized by excellence, equity, and efficiency. In achieving this objective it may be necessary to reconfigure grades, close a school or a portion of a school's educational program for operational and/or financial reasons.

Specifically:

1. The Board may:
 - 1.1 Close a school permanently or for a specified period of time;
 - 1.2 Transfer students from one school building to one or more other school buildings on a permanent or temporary basis; or
 - 1.3 Change the grade offerings at a school.

2. The Board recognizes that there are certain critical factors that must be met by a school in order to exist as a viable educational institution:
 - 2.1 Program Factors;
 - 2.2 Critical Minimum Enrollment;
 - 2.3 Revenue factors.

3. School Grade Configuration
 - 3.1 The Board shall consider changing the grade configuration of a school when any one or more of the following conditions exist:
 - 3.1.1 The school's five-year enrollment projections and previous trends indicate the probability that future enrollment numbers in the school may not allow for programming which is effective and efficient.
 - 3.1.2 Total student enrollment in three or more grades falls below numbers considered viable from a financial operations and program delivery perspective.
 - 3.1.3 The continued operation of the school will create excessive costs to the Division.

3.2 The Superintendent will annually review the school grade configuration of the Division's schools and notify the Board at its first meeting in November in any year as to which schools meet the criteria for a school grade configuration change. This report will be part of the report regarding school closure criteria.

3.2.1 When making a recommendation to change the grade configuration the Board shall consider:

3.2.1.1 Implications for students;

3.2.1.2 Educational and financial impact;

3.2.1.3 Number of students who would need to be relocated;

3.2.1.4 Need for, and extent of, busing;

3.2.1.5 School(s) that the students will be directed to;

3.2.1.6 Duration of the change.

4. Transfer of Students

4.1 The decision to transfer students to another building would be made by board motion by June 30th of the preceding school year.

4.2 The parents of every student enrolled in the school that may be affected by the transfer will be notified of the board's decision immediately. They will also be notified of the details, in writing, within fourteen (14) days of the board decision.

4.3 Any other person, municipality, or community organization who, in the opinion of the board, may be significantly affected will also be notified in writing,

5. School Closure

5.1 The Board shall consider closure of a school when any one or more of the following conditions exist and in compliance with section 62 of the *Education Act*:

5.1.1 Total student enrolment in three or more grades falls below numbers considered viable from a financial operations and program delivery perspective.

School closure may be considered if minimum enrolment as of September 30 in the current school year is below the following Levels:

Elementary – thirty (30) students in any three (3) consecutive Grades;

Junior High – fifty (50) students in grades 7, 8, and 9;

High School – seventy-five (75) students in grades 10, 11, and 12.

- 5.1.2 The Board's five-year enrollment projections and previous trends indicate probability that future enrollment numbers in the school may not allow for programming which is effective and efficient in the judgement of the Superintendent.
- 5.2 The Board may request the Superintendent to report the school closure criteria to the Division's schools and report to the Board at its meeting in November.
- 5.3 Where the Board is considering a closure, there shall be a notice of motion at a regular meeting of the Board, proposing that a school(s) be closed.
- 5.4 Where the Board has made a Notice of Intent motion regarding the closure of a school(s) the Board must consider the following factors:
 - 5.4.1 Location and suitability of alternative school accommodation for the students affected;
 - 5.4.2 Program implications for students currently in the schools to which a transfer of students could be affected and the implication for those students who could be transferred;
 - 5.4.3 Program implications for other schools to which students could be transferred;
 - 5.4.4 Transportation needs of all students potentially affected and the implications on both a local and Division basis;
 - 5.4.5 Factors related to the school building which include but are not limited to:
 - 5.4.5.1 The age and expected life of the building;
 - 5.4.5.2 Building modernization requirements; and
 - 5.4.5.3 Education program needs.
 - 5.4.6 The continued operations of the school will create excessive costs to the Division, including:
 - 5.4.6.1 Operational costs; and,
 - 5.4.6.2 Capital implications.
 - 5.4.7 The capital needs of the school or the schools which may experience increased enrollments as a result of a transfer of students.

6. There will be effective communication to parent(s) of students attending the school and the electors in the attendance area of a school being considered for closure.
 - 6.1 The Board shall communicate information and implications of the possible school closure, in writing, to the parent(s) of every child and student enrolled in the school who, in the opinion of the Board, will be significantly affected by the closure of the school. Such communication shall, at a minimum, set out the following:
 - 6.1.1. How the closure would affect the attendance area defined for that school;
 - 6.1.2 How the closure would affect the attendance at other schools;
 - 6.1.3 Information on the Board's long-range capital plan;
 - 6.1.4 The number of students who would need to be relocated as a result of the closure;
 - 6.1.5 The need for, and extent of, busing;
 - 6.1.6 Program implications for other schools and for the students when they are attending other schools;
 - 6.1.7 The educational and financial impact of closing the school, including the effect on operational costs and capital implication;
 - 6.1.8 The educational and financial impact if the school were to remain open;
 - 6.1.9 The capital needs of the schools that may have increased enrolment as a result of the closure;
 - 6.1.10 The possible uses of the school building or space in the school building if the entire school is being closed.
 - 6.1.11 The time and location of the public meeting referred to in clause 7.1.
7. Where the Board is considering the closure of a school, the Board:
 - 7.1 Shall organize and convene a public meeting for the purpose of discussing:
 - 7.1.1 Alternatives to the closure;
 - 7.1.2 The closure and the implications of the closure for the students, for the community, and for the school system; and
 - 7.1.3 Implementation plans for the closure.

- 7.2 Shall provide an opportunity for the council of the municipality in which the school is located to provide a written statement to the Board of the impact the closure may have on the community, and viable alternatives to the closure.
 - 7.3 May hold other meetings with respect to the closure at times and places as the Board may determine.
 - 7.4 The date and time of the public meeting referred to in clause 7.1 shall be:
 - 7.4.1 Posted in five or more conspicuous places in the area or areas of the school or schools affected by the closure, for a period of at least fourteen (14) calendar days before the date of the public meeting; and
 - 7.4.2 Advertised in a newspaper circulating within the areas of the school or schools affected by the proposed closure, on at least two occasions as close to the date of the meeting as practical.
 - 7.5 At least four (4) trustees of the Board shall attend the public meeting referred to in clause 7.1.
 - 7.6 The Board will ensure that minutes of all public meetings held under this section are prepared and available to the public within three (3) weeks of the meeting held.
 - 7.7 Following the meeting referred to in clause 7.1 there shall be a period of three (3) weeks for electors to provide written responses to the Board, including preferred alternatives, to the possible closure.
 - 7.8 The Board shall give due consideration to any written submissions on the proposed closure that it receives after the public meeting referred to in clause 7.1.
 - 7.9 The Board may allow for presentations at a Regular Board Meeting. These presentations must be conducted in an orderly and efficient manner. Any requests to present must be made to the Executive Assistant – Board, a minimum of two weeks prior to the scheduled meeting.
 - 7.10 The final debate by the Board and the vote upon the resolution shall occur only after clauses 7.1 and 7.6 have been completed.
8. If the decision of the Board is to close the school:
 - 8.1 The Board shall forthwith notify the Minister of Education in writing of the decision.

- 8.2 The Board shall identify alternative uses for the school or dispose of the property in accordance with section 192 of the *Education Act*. The Board will consult the affected community relative to the future use of the land and school building, playgrounds, and other structures. The final decision(s) will be made by the Board, subject to the Disposition of Property Regulation and Disposition of Real Property (Policy 23).
9. Discontinuance or relocation of a regular program or an alternative program or a special needs program, is not a school closure.
10. This policy does not apply to schools located on Hutterite Colonies as these schools are considered to be alternative programs.

Legal Reference: Section 52, 53, 62, 192, 194, 248, 249 Education Act

Cross Reference: School Closure Checklist (Form 16-1)
Policy 21 – Disposition of Real Property

Amended: December 8th, 2022